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ABSTRACT

A course called "The Study of Teaching," designed to develop a theory on teaching and to explore the philosophy of teaching, is described. Five teacher education professors and five graduate students participated. Although one professor acted as instructor, the fifteen hour course was relatively unstructured and based on collegial discussion within the group. Discussion focused upon the contention that teaching can be investigated and described as being the act of creating, communicating, decision making, valuing, and as an aesthetic experience. A participant-observer of the course reports the progress of the group, discussions on each of the five foci central to the course, and conclusions made as well as further questions that were raised by the group. Appended is an abstract of a paper generated by the course on the process of theory building and its influence on teacher education faculty. Materials used in conjunction with the course are listed. (JD)

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Studying Teaching

A Critical Appraisal
By a Participant-Observer

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Prepared for the Annual Meeting
of
The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

Detroit, Michigan

February 17-20, 1981

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Acknowledgement

To the Group, without whom this would not have been written.

I. The Questions

Can five professors and five graduate students gather together for fifteen three hour weekly sessions and discuss important personal and professional interests?

Can five professors and five graduate students focus on "The Study of Teaching" and conclude anything of value?

Can five professors and five graduate students develop a theory or meta-theories in a period of fifteen weekly three-hour sessions?

Can five professors and five graduate students investigate and describe teaching as creating, communicating, decision making, valuing and as aesthetic phenomena?

II. Significance of the Questions

We are not aware of other universities or colleges that have developed a course entitled, "The Study of Teaching," which has then had both professors and students formally register for and then fully participate in the course.

The course was conducted over the traditional fifteen week semester for three hours on the same day of each week. In as

much as possible the students and the professors perceived themselves as colleagues in a joint undertaking.

Certainly, we thought, this was a unique effort and if we could successfully teach and learn in the course for one semester then maybe such a course would be a paradigm that could be followed at the University of Maryland. Further, we hoped, if our venture was deemed a success, and we could report it to our colleagues at other universities and colleges, then maybe our effort could be replicated elsewhere. Of course, this latter premise rested on the assumption that our efforts would merit imitation anywhere else.

The desire to study teaching is grandiose. But it is hypothesized by some savants that those of us who profess to be professors in the area of education ought to know something about teaching. And, if knowing something about teaching is not possible, then we ought to at least have studied it.

Even more to the point, professors often do not talk with each other about issues essential to the study of education except during doctoral dissertation orals. Even then there are time limits and some topics are considered too auricular or are the hallowed ground of a colleague's recondite interest. So, if five professors could communicate with each other on a substantive level and do so for an extended period of time then maybe some academic crypts could be opened. Add to this the possibility that the professors

would involve graduate students in the quest, then certainly a milestone would have been passed.

Assuming for a moment that theory is important, and that the development of "meta-theory" is anything more than an effort on the part of professors to carve out an academic niche to justify their institutional existence, then such theory and meta-theory might be useful to someone else. Or at least, it might generate ideas in others that could be profitably pursued. And beyond hope--but a possibility--the development of such theory and meta-theory could lead to the improvement of practice.

The Center for the Study of Teaching in the University of Maryland's College of Education developed a position paper during the academic year, 1979-1980, which contended that teaching can be investigated and described as being the act of creating, communicating, decision making, valuing and as aesthetic experience. Even after the Center issued the statement not all of the members of the Center were necessarily in full agreement with the document, but all of the Center members believed that the study of what later became known as the "five foci" was to be a worthwhile endeavor. The forum for attending to the above was to be the course entitled: "The Study of Teaching." So it seemed that the question of whether we could study these "foci" and arrive at some conclusions about their validity seemed to make sense.¹

1. Appendix A contains, "Theory Building as a Process Factor Influencing the Determination of Quality Faculty in Teacher Education," which helps to detail the proposed study.

(4)

And of immediate concern to the Center was the creation of a coterie in the College of Education consisting of those people whose central interest was the study of teaching and who were concerned with the potential for improved practice.

In summary, the questions presented in the opening section are significant, at least to the group who took the course. Further, we have suggested that the responses to these questions might have some significance for other educators. The formality of taking a course and of obliging professors to be in the same place for fifteen weeks with graduate students and of including graduate students in the process of resolutely studying teaching seemed to be a unique and an important thing to do. But how to proceed?

III. The Procedure

The logistics of creating the class were not difficult, especially with the help of a conscientious graduate assistant. The professors were formally admitted as "Advanced Special Students" to the University of Maryland's Graduate School and they registered for the course. The designated instructor for the course was able to convince some graduate students that the project was of value, and if not of value, that with the inclusion of the professors that it would at least be enthralling.

As mentioned above, one of the professors was assigned to be the instructor for the course. During the Center for the Study of Teaching's deliberations it was decided that one professor would have the responsibility for seeing that the course properly got into the schedule of classes, that a room was reserved for the class, that the administrators were informed of what we were doing, and that the other important accouterments were attended to. It was not initially decided what teaching role the instructor would have and what leadership role the instructor would assume once the course was underway.

It was generally assumed that at least the initial directions or suggestions would be given by the person called the "instructor." What would happen after that was anyone's guess. But certainly, other professors will comprehend the instructor's apprehension

about presiding over a possible debacle and publicly displaying one's skills in front of the scrutiny of colleagues.

The group began meeting at the appointed time and the initial organization and plan was established--basically, we would meet again--same time, same place. Throughout the course the instructor, feeling a responsibility for the study of the five foci and the commitment to the graduate students that the foci were to be the cornerstone of the course, had to continually attempt to either teach and instruct or to let the group find its own path. This personal dichotomy was a difficult one to reconcile and one that is faced by all teachers at one time or another.

During the second session, the instructor stated that one of the procedures proposed for our study of teaching was to have one of the participants be not only a full participant but that person should also be an observer of the class sessions. The participant-observer should make sensible notes so that a narrative could be prepared which would critically comment on what went on. That is what this report is *all* about.²

It was suggested early in the proceedings that the meetings should be video taped or at the very least, an audio record should be kept.

2. In order to get an idea for some of this writer's pedagogical origin, a bibliography is contained in Appendix B. The bibliography was extracted directly from John Earl Splaine, Jr., A Model Teacher Education Program for Teachers of Low Income High School Students. (Boston University: Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, 1973), pp. 134-144.

There was an objection to both of these suggestions and they were dismissed with little counter argument.

In general, some of the interpersonal relationships in the group were strained. There were no explicit or implicit guidelines as to what would be talked about, how personal the discussion would be, and with what degree of vigor things would be said. Of course, even though such rules were absent, maybe we were better off and more natural without them. A clear set of rules may have made us more efficient, but the rules may have obviated any chance we had for wisdom.

Initially, there was considerable interaction among the professors. Some of it quite contentious and often vitriolic. The vitriol abated toward the end of the course because the debates were valued and the contentiousness ultimately turned into mutual respect. On the other hand, there were several heated interchanges between faculty and graduate students and a number of the encounters turned out less than sanguine.

As far as the consideration of theory development and the original five foci were concerned, the group devoted approximately one half of its time on the foci. This was done either through guest speakers, previously recorded video tapes, or through presentations made by members of the class. The rest of the time was spent on group maintenance activities.

IV. The Findings

A. The Communication Process

This section is concerned with the interpersonal process, the group's formation and how the group proceeded. Some of the commentary is staccato in an effort to preserve spontaneity. Except when a comment is directly quoted, they are all paraphrased. Some of the paragraphs are exceptionally short in an attempt not to distort the intent of the comment with verbiage.

It is also important to note that a number of questions were generated in the group and through group discussion; these are interspersed throughout the narrative. Conceivably, the main contribution of the group was not what it found but rather the questions it generated.

We wondered: will we be too scientific if we categorize and itemize the process of teaching and, thus, destroy its artistry?

We often asked each other whether we accepted the five foci as providing a conceptual base from which to begin theory building. Should we concentrate more on the foci? Is concentrating on the foci the central concern of the group? Should it be? Or should we address the study of teaching in its broadest, most eclectic sense?

Some of the group argued for more discipline and structure; others argued that we had too much already. The instructor's position was that we had agreed to study the foci and that such study would provide the structure.

The reasons for people being interested in the study of teaching varied from the personal ("I wanted to be like my fourth grade teacher, there was a 'softness' in the classroom") to the pedantic and the curious.

One student courageously presented an idea for a doctoral dissertation to the group. Suffice it to say that the student was attempting to be creative in her approach to a dissertation and confronted the usual academician's dilemma. What is a dissertation? How systematic should the collection of data be? How much deviance from the established mode is allowed? Encouraged?

On the evening that the proposed dissertation topic was discussed, there was heightened anxiety which bordered on vituperation between the professors. The graduate students seemed to enjoy and benefit from the discussion, but one faculty member objected to the domination of the conversation by other faculty. A graduate student argued that the nature of the topic lent more to faculty involvement and that learning was taking place. This discussion, with the dissertation topic as the original focus, continued through the group's "break" and became more concerned with the issue of equality between the professors and the students. The graduate students assured the faculty member that they were not being unduly reticent and would participate when moved to do so.

As with the previous discussion, and with many others, we hardly ever ended at the appointed time. The discussions just continued. Seemingly, if members of the group did not have other commitments, the discussions may have continued long into the night. As with the discussions during the break, the discussions after the class ~~discussion~~ either continued with the topic that the class ended with or moved on to entirely new issues.

A frequent question--what do we want to get out of this experience? Most of the responses were personal--with little consensus.

In addition to our generally vigorous discussions, we saw a videotape on creativity, saw a videotape with a teacher confronting a problem and needing to make a decision, played a simulation game dealing with values, and had a telephone-conference with Elliot Eisner of Stanford University. This latter activity deserves more comment.

Prior to the telephone-conference with Eisner, a number of group members sent questions that they wanted to have answered by him. After making the telephone connection, he first responded to the questions that had been sent to him and then responded to other questions that group members had. His comments were primarily directed toward teaching as an aesthetic activity. On this evening we invited another class of students who were studying art education to join us. After the call, both classes exchanged ideas and the different perspectives of the other class were stimulating. We all concurred that the task of studying teaching was a virtually endless one and that searching for easy answers could lead to an assortment of pitfalls.

Immediately before our class, our instructor teaches the same course, "The Study of Teaching" to a group of undergraduates. One of the students in that class came in to our class one evening and we expressed an interest in what was going on in that class. We asked to be informed on what was going on in his class. We have not yet heard although we believe we will.

Should our instructor direct what is to occur?

Should the group find its own path?

Do we learn as much when a teacher directs us?

Periodically, the instructor gave us assignments so that individuals would make presentations concerned with one of the foci. Presentors gave reading assignments to group members. The reading was generally conscientiously completed and provided fodder for discussion.

Maybe, as previously suggested, the quality of our deliberations is illustrated by the quantity and quality of the questions we have generated. Indeed, how much attention should we give to the interpersonal processes within the group? Is there individual security within the group? Are the graduate students involved and participating enough? How much direction from the instructor do we need? Is what we honestly say in the group accepted? Do people in this group have the courage to honestly state an idea and accept someone else's honest reaction?

Several of us had the experience of driving home together after class. We generally continued our conversation focusing on issues raised in the class. We assumed that others were doing the same thing either immediately after the class or during the ensuing week. Lunch frequently became a symposium for the exchange of ideas.

We did try some gimmicks to improve the group's functioning. For example, during one class two students took control of the group and attempted to give it direction. They tried to structure the interaction and focus more on the issues. On that same evening it was decided that we would have a break during each class at 8:30 p.m. and would end the class at 9:30 p.m. In order to do this, we would stop talking at 9:20 p.m. After this decision was made, the "subversives" in the group saw to it that it was not implemented. We decided to go on learning anyway, regardless of the time.

Another gimmick involved "ad hoc musical chairs." At various times, the seating places were purposely changed by some members of the group in an attempt to see if the new seating arrangements would change the focus of the discussion and subsequently the process of interaction. But as with other forms of behavior modification, these activities did not go to the root of the problem and did not make a significant difference.

Maybe the imposition of the five foci was the problem even though getting into that subject matter was the preferred mode for the majority of the group.

Only one evening did we have poor attendance. On that night, three people were absent and one person who generally came late was later than usual. The absence of group members adversely affected the group's functioning.

The week after the session with poor attendance, one of the students who was not present the previous week discussed her views of the course and what she wanted to get out of the experience. She voiced the concern, as did others, that she had not formulated a theory of teaching nor had she arrived at conclusions about the applicability of the five foci. She mentioned that even though she was a professional from outside of education she did find (a slight surprise) that teachers were human, variable, vulnerable, but most of all--people. She concluded that "professors" were actually "okay" and that this had been a fascinating experience. For her, the lofty "ivory tower" had been scaled.

As one student remarked: "For a graduate student to be able to talk openly with professors for fifteen weeks is an experience." And another

to observe that "This course has started me thinking about a lot of things." suggests that what the instructor said might have validity: "This is a good example of how ten people go about studying teaching."

Because the interpersonal difficulties were not resolved, the biggest imbrolios occurred when the evenings began with apparent congeniality. But the "hidden agenda" ultimately surfaced. There is nothing wrong with a vigorous contention of ideas as long as invectives are absent and the sessions do not become vituperative. Healthy conflict can provoke further learning. In our case adversity sometimes led to anxiety and developed into anger. Consequently, learning during these sessions was inhibited.

Most of the group conscientiously completed the reading. When we had substantial reading to do we would often begin the next class by discussing the reading. Even though we often diverged from the reading that we did, the discussions that the reading stimulated were lively.

However, reading assignments did subside toward the end of the course in part because of our struggle for structure and the confusion as to what we could do without it. Some of the group members wanted (even though they believed they did not need it) specific direction; others did not.

As previously mentioned, several problems recurred throughout the sessions. The instructor sometimes felt "guilt" because of the frequent diversions from the five foci. Others would express frustration and exclaim: "Let's get on with the task," regardless of what that task might be. The problem of whether there was mutual listening became a theme throughout. As indicated earlier, intellectual challenges were often met with visceral reactions. Also, the fear that the professors were

dominating the proceedings was a worrisome one. In the second week it was alleged that there was a split between the professors and the graduate students. The professors, argued one professor, were dominating the conversation. The graduate students contended otherwise. This concern recurred frequently.

Other vexations surfaced. Were we being confused by the process and, therefore, unable to focus on the product? Were the process and the product actually the same thing? Were roles, status, sex, age, and department affiliation disabling factors in our attempt to arrive at some consensus?

Yet, in the face of some acrimony; in the face of an apparent morass; in the face of seeming insurmountable roadblocks to our working together--we did. Teaching and the study of it is difficult; it is inefficient; and it is sometimes unintelligible. But everyone concerned with teaching should have such an experience. An experience that provided a glimpse of teachers who were trying to learn more. An experience that left some of the group's members wanting to study teaching in the same way again, wanting to do so as a priority ahead of many other things and wanting to do it with the same people. What is it that we did?

B. Theory Development

What did we find? What theories did we develop? What did we discover about the five foci? What meta theories were developed? Is a discipline a body of knowledge or a way of knowing? What is a theory? Why develop theories anyway? "When I see my student teachers, I know if they are good--why do I need theory?"

In general, what follows will clearly indicate that we did not find many answers in our quest. Some of the members wanted some answers but we found few. And maybe answers are not what we should have been searching for. To paraphrase Margaret Mead: "The right answer is often the trite answer." Our attempt at theory development may appear confused and, if it appears to be so, it may be because we approached the study of teaching with over two centuries of classroom experience and additional time in schools and in reverie. So if we appear not to have come up with much, it might be that we came to the study with a lot of knowledge and were wise enough to dismiss the obvious cliches, the hackneyed, and the gobbledygook. Maybe this is mere self delusion. But I think not. On the contrary, maybe our biggest fear should have been that we would miss the obvious.

Indeed, we never did resolve the question of whether teaching can be studied as a creating, communicating, decision making, valuing, and as aesthetic activity. But we did address these issues. What did we find?

1. Teaching as Creating:

We concluded that we probably would not even recognize creativity if we saw it, never mind be able to assess it. But do such apparent vacuous banalities have any historic or erudite basis? So, we retreated to the Ancient Athenian Greeks and asked if they have been the only creative ones. The Ancient Athenians were concerned with balance and

rhythm: the mind, the body, the soul. Their curriculum began with grammar, music and gymnastics, but those "subjects" formed a concatenation and the division of disciplines was in no way rigid. The Ancient Athenians welcomed change, they welcomed the new and they did create. Why were they so creative? Possibly because they had less to inhibit them, less that came before them; they were free to create anew. Contemporary educators have much that has come before us. We have much that binds us.

2. Teaching as Communicating:

Does communication have to be intended to be called communication? Does the message have to be clear? Should the message be clear? Is there a place for intentional obfuscation? Does learning occur when the message is confused? Is communication the primary function of teaching? These and other questions perplexed us, even though several of us have spent much of our professional lives studying the communication process.

We had discussions concerning the effects of mass media on young people and on ourselves. During the week prior to one of our discussions, "The Women's Room" and "Shogun" were shown on network television. We discussed the value of the programs, and if and how the programs were teaching us and our children. Are such concerns the proper bailiwick of a course in the study of teaching? Does the media and its concomitant

commercial influence teach more than classroom teachers do? If so, why? What implications does a study of the mass media have for the study of teaching?

This writer was assigned to attend a workshop concerning communication processes for teachers. What occurred in the workshop is worth reporting. John C. Carr conducted the workshop for the University of Maryland faculty.³

Carr contended that teaching is primarily an act of communicating with students. "The better we communicate; the better we teach." One of the activities of the group proved particularly enlightening. Carr asked the group to cite the "traits of their 'best' teachers." The group decided on the following traits:

They...

have a strong self-image.

know their subject matter and want to communicate it to students.

are honest.

have the ability to interest students in the subject.

are patient in helping their students solve learning problems.

³. Dr. Carr is a Professor in the College of Education at the University of Maryland's College Park Campus. The workshop was conducted on November 13, 1980.

challenge their students.

use alternative teaching strategies to enable different students to learn.

involve students in making decisions.

are secure in their belief that they chose the right profession for them.

have a sense of humor.

care about their students.

respect their students.

have passion for what they are doing.

Carr stated that what the group identified as being the traits of good teachers is supported by the available research and that we should act on that knowledge.⁴

3. Teaching as Decision Making.

We did come reasonably close to defining decision making: "A process of deciding among options and then choosing a course of action." Of course, we had to use the word "deciding" in the definition, but we did have more

4. Carr's assertion is supported elsewhere. Splaine, Op. Cit., arrived at the same conclusion. The characteristics of effective teachers have, for the most part, been identified. Most groups of educators can develop such a list, as the workshop group did, so what remains (as well as to continue the study of teaching) is to implement what we do know.

agreement on its definition than we did for either creating or communicating.

We believe that we learn to make decisions eclectically rather than linearly or merely through a process of itemizing the advantages and disadvantages of a possible course of action. We asked: where do ethics fit into the decision making process? What part does personal morality play?

4. Teaching as Valuing.

Toward the middle of the course sessions we were examining the role valuing has in teaching and decided to survey our values toward our group and toward what we were doing. Without a doubt, it is possible that other values would have been expressed at other times depending on the ambiance present in the group.

We value...

the search for knowledge.

a free exchange of ideas.

our self worth.

each other.

the feelings of each member of the group.

our objectives: stated and implied.

the ideas we have generated.

controversy and conflict.

teaching.

our three hours together.

our growth: individually and as a group.

This observer would argue that we did not always behave as if the above were our values. But does this mean that we really did not hold these values?

Yet, the question still remains: what role does valuing have in teaching? We believe that too much specificity in answering this has possible deleterious consequences. We do believe, however, that valuing is an integral part of teaching and that we all have values that we are constantly expressing and defining. We know that values played an important part in our decorum and deliberations.

5. Teaching as an Aesthetic Phenomenon.

We defined the aesthetic as being an individual experience: a moment that is generally pleasurable. We agreed that the aesthetic is impressionistic--an innovative recombination of the senses.

We considered Eisner's concept of connoisseurship in teaching. What does it mean? When is teaching artistic? How does one appreciate it? Can we measure appreciation? Does teaching as an art have any educational significance? Can we artistically study teaching?

If teaching is an art and not a science or a technology, then we ought to get on with the task of nurturing artists. Or, would this be too much of a bold departure from what we presently do?

In our attempt to understand teaching as an aesthetic phenomenon, we tried our hand at artistry and attempted to create a series of metaphors by using the phrase, "The teacher as...." We felt that if we could develop some useful metaphors then maybe this would lead us to some theories. Therefore, we became metaphorical (although we may not have developed legitimate metaphors) in trying to develop our thoughts. The following are our meagre efforts and are drawn from our own commentary or from that of our guests.

The teacher as a stage manager.

The teacher as a lover.

The teacher as a creator.

The teacher as a communicator.

The teacher as an artist.

The teacher as an electrician.

The teacher as a moralist.

The teacher as a shepherd.

The teacher as a hound dog.

The teacher as a farmer.

The teacher as fertilizer.

The teacher as a musician.

The teacher as a planter of flowers.

The teacher as a student.

The teacher as a sculptor.

The teacher as a lighthouse in a storm.

C. More Comments and Questions

One of our members said that his graduate school experiences were intensified by having lunches with his professors. By lunching with his professors he felt that he learned more of substance than he did in many of his courses and got to know his professors better, both personally and professionally. He asked: is this collegial interaction a form of teaching? If so, how would you measure it? Or, would measuring it make it as pedantic as some other forms of "teaching" are?

Reagan
After the pre-election debate between President Reagan and former President Carter, we discussed the debate and its implications. Who was the winner? How could we possibly know? Was there any teaching going on during the debate? How would we know?

One evening we were intrigued by the questions: How close should the student-teacher relationship be? Should it be intimate? What do we mean by intimacy in this case? How close is too close?

We also pondered whether our society and its policy makers actually dictate the quality of teaching. How much affect do our society's mores, folkways and implied rules have on teaching? Society designates that school administrators make sure that teachers follow the society's dictums. How much influence do such administrators have on teaching? Do we have equality of opportunity in our society? Should we have equality of opportunity in our society? Who should decide?

Can we help people to become better teachers? Is the student teaching experience a valid one for measuring potential as a teacher? Can a teacher education program make a difference in people? Have we a right to make a difference? An obligation? What would a Doctoral program in the "Study of Teaching" be like? Should ^{those} who talk about and write about teaching be good teachers themselves? Does the requirement for publishing at colleges and universities inhibit good teaching? How do we know if it does?

D. What we did find

We are sure that we have found the following:

Teaching is a complex activity.

The study of teaching is frustrating and difficult.

Teaching is value laden and the approach to its study is value laden.

The study of teaching is more difficult and complex than most of us had previously thought.

The study of teaching must attend to social, economic, psychological, political, and anthropological factors.

The study of teaching needs to consider the person doing the teaching as well as the persons experiencing the teaching.

The road to defining the "Five Foci" is strewn with boulders.

The more the definers know and the more they have experienced, the more difficult it is to reach a consensus on definition--yet, all the more reason to do so.

(24)

Being creative is difficult and possibly impossible to measure.

We all want to continue our study of teaching, if not collectively, then at least in our own ways. But in the interim--what tentative conclusions, what recommendations and what suggestions for further study do we have?

V. Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Study

Thus, five professors and five students set out to study teaching. The questions to be studied were reasonably clear in the minds of some of the participants and less clear in the minds of others. The significance to the group of the proposed study was clear and there was some hope that the procedures, the findings and the conclusions would have meaning and benefit for others.

The group formed a class and met for three hours per week for a fifteen week semester. One of the professors was assigned the role of instructor and was considered to be fulfilling one third of that individual's normal teaching responsibilities. What can be concluded from this venture?

A. Conclusions

1. Can five professors and five graduate students gather together for fifteen three-hour sessions and discuss important personal and professional interests? Yes, but within limits.⁵ The group did stay intact for fifteen weeks. Considering the other responsibilities that group members had, attendance was good. There was a considerable amount of time spent on maintaining the group's cohesiveness and its ability to work together. When the issues became too personal, communication was sometimes impeded. The fact remains, however, that the ten people who started the class finished the class. Furthermore, it would be interesting

⁵It is not meant to suggest here that just any five professors and five graduate students could have been involved in such an activity. Clearly, there was "self selection" in choosing to register for the course.

to have seen if someone could have come in to the class during the last six or seven sessions and identified who the professors were and who were the students.⁶

2. Can five professors and five graduate students focus on the study of teaching and conclude anything of value? Yes, if we begin by assuming that the act of studying teaching is of inherent value. Each person concluded the fifteen weeks with a sharper definition of the issues, or at least with a keener awareness of their complexity. One of the group's main findings may not seem particularly sagacious to those outside the group but was significant to the group: teaching is a multi-faceted, complex, and difficult activity. Indeed, this participant-observer would not be surprised if the instructor's undergraduate group arrived at more conclusions, more succinctly stated and were stated with more cogency. (Again, Margaret Mead's admonition that the right answer is often the trite answer.) We could agree on few "right" answers. From before Socrates to the present, people have speculated on "right" teaching and "right" learning. Some have done so systematically, and others have proceeded more informally. History is replete with conjectures and hypotheses, but there are few truths. So, maybe wisdom is when the conjectures and hypotheses stay tentative.

If nothing else, the major finding of this group concerning the above question is that the study of teaching is valuable in and of itself, and that it is a frustrating and a difficult process that nevertheless needs to be pursued.

⁶ Sex and age stereotypes may have been clues, but if a "new" observer came in, it would be hard to tell based on the degree of involvement.

3. Can five professors and five graduate students develop a theory or meta-theories in a period of fifteen weekly three-hour sessions? No, but maybe they ought to try. This is not to suggest that some theories and meta-theories were not originated and that attempts were not made to validate them. Each member of the group developed a personal framework and developed some theories that will guide individual group members in the future. Developing a theory for the entire group to see and hold, however, was difficult and would have been so even if there had not been disagreement on what theory is, not to mention the extant disagreement as to what meta-theory means.

4. Can five professors and five graduate students investigate and describe teaching as creating, communicating, decision making, valuing and as aesthetic phenomena? Yes, it can be investigated and can be so described. Even though the resulting description may not yield a plausible theory.

Teaching, if it is defined as prompting something new (a change) in the learner that is as yet unknown or not anticipated, is by its very nature a creative activity. If, however, the anticipated outcomes are pre-ordained, with clearly prescribed methodologies for reaching those ends, and the ends are measured against a set of standards, then teaching is not a creative act. The group opted for the former. Teaching is a creative act.

Teaching involves communicating with someone, even if it is auto-didactic. The communication need not, however, be intentional or even lucid. It just needs to occur. Our artificial and natural environments are always teaching us in this sense. Television, music, films and

non-verbal signals of all kinds communicate--therefore, they teach. The producers of such media and its messages are not inanimate, neither is their audience.

Teaching involves decision making. What should I do now? What should we do now? How should we do it? For what ends should I do it? Why should I do it? When should I do it? The more alternatives one has, the better.

Teaching involves valuing and expressing values. It can be no other way. To argue otherwise is to have one's head in the proverbial sand. One of the most important things we can do is to recognize when we are expressing those values and to recognize when we are imposing them. The latter is a particularly pernicious act. The group encountered the most difficulty when the values being expressed were being expressed by a message sender who did not understand that values were intrinsic to the message and the way it was being sent. In the group, values were being expressed all of the time. The fact that we were in some way teaching each other values in the sessions was not always recognized or understood. But values were omnipresent and valuing was going on all of the time. Teaching cannot occur without people who have values and who know when they are expressing them.

Teaching is an aesthetic experience. We felt in our sessions, we felt for each other, we felt for the group, we felt for our instructor, we felt for our subject matter, we felt for the children we have taught, we felt for the society we teach in and we felt for the world we live in. We felt and heard the music of teaching, even though at times it was baroque.

B. Recommendations

1. This course should be continued at this University for undergraduate students, for graduate students and for professors.
2. We strongly recommend that professors continue to be involved as students in this course.
3. The instructor should have the experience of being a student in this course.
4. The study of teaching should continue to be the focus of this course. A pre-ordained agenda or focus should be avoided.
5. Other colleges and universities should attempt such courses with professors involved. Possibly other universities and colleges will learn from our experience.

C. Implications for Further Study

We need to continue to study teaching. We need to do so individually and collectively. We need to express our hunches, our conjectures, our hypotheses and our feelings.

All of this needs to be done further.

There are three parts in truth: first, the inquiry, which is the wooing of it; secondly, the knowledge of it, which is the presence of it; and thirdly, the belief, which is the enjoyment of it.

Francis Bacon

VI. Epilogue

The main body of this document was completed prior to the final two classes. Most of the time during the last two classes was consumed by reports directed toward better understanding the "five foci."¹ The class became more pedagogic and the communication became less vital. Members of the group made presentations on the communication process, on decision making and on aesthetics. Absent were comments like, "Hey, I read this, what do you think?" Or, "I have been studying creativity and this might have meaning for some of the rest of you. It certainly has meaning for me." We retreated to the safe ground. The passion was gone.

We tried to be scholarly and in the attempt missed the opportunity to explore what meaning teaching had for each of us. Through such an exploration it might have been possible to discover more than the commonplace. Through such an exploration the bromides and the shibboleths might have been beaten back.

During our "breaks" we began to discuss Mac Davis and the new fashions resulting from the movie, "Urban Cowboy." We had become too auricular in previous weeks and that was risky so retreat was in order. And, retreat we did. The music went from the baroque to the "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" in a painfully short period of time. Before the retreat, however, we had touched the "good" and maybe that is our contribution to the study of teaching. I doubt that just any five professors and five graduate students could have become colleagues as we did.

¹I find it difficult to write the words: "five foci." An educationist must have dreamed of them.

A. More Metaphors

In our next to last class, we developed some more metaphors and they follow:²

The teacher as a parent

The teacher as a light bulb

The teacher as a fountain

The teacher as a funnel

The teacher as an actor

The teacher as a composer

The teacher as a playwright

The teacher as a play director

The teacher as a traveler

The teacher as a gourmet

The teacher as a fork in the road

The teacher as a prism

The teacher as the sun

B. Comments On This Paper

This paper was given to all of the members of the group in time to be read for the last class. What follows is a summary of the verbal comments (paraphrased) made on the last evening:

...the pronoun "we" should be changed to "I" throughout the paper.

...you were too hard on us.

²I showed the list of metaphors on page 21 to a group of students and was delighted with the ideas that they generated. It helped them to think about teaching in ways that they never did before.

...you were too easy on us.

...you do not know very much about how to be a participant-observer.

...there was no "teacher" in this class and you should not have said there was. This group was leaderless.

...we got along a lot better than you said we did.

...I did not feel that I could say what I really thought throughout the semester.

...Let us do this again sometime. Next semester?

The following are two written commentaries I received. They are quoted verbatim and have not been edited either by me or the author.

John,

Excellent paper!

My only suggestions relate to position of graduate students in the course.

P. 2-3 bottom paragraph on p.2, carrying over to p.3 seems to imply a secondary role for graduate students. I object!

Several places throughout the paper, the graduate students are referred to simply as students, conveying to me a different role from professor members. The first example of this that I noticed occurs at the top of page 9.

George

To: The Students of Teaching
From: Art Adkins
Re: John Splaine's Report

Since I am one of the "Students of Teaching," both as a member of the class and because that is my professional specialty, this note is, as usual, addressed to myself as well as to others.

I write this in the first person because it is a personal statement. (I wish John had done the same.) I think we owe a debt to John for the task he set himself and for a noble effort to carry it out. The statement is notable for its clarity and comprehensiveness.

I wish now that we had all agreed to do something like it, on paper as well as (inevitably) in our heads--and occasionally in our viscera. It would be interesting, and enlightening, to compare them, since we were all "participant observers." (Perhaps I should say "are," since the course--if that's what it was--is still in progress as I write this.)

One of the things I like about John's paper is that there is something to agree with, and something to disagree with, on every page, nay in almost every paragraph. This is even true of the grammar!

Shall I detail the agreement, and the disagreements? Fear not; 'twould make a document at least as long as John's, and much more wearisome. And it would be of no value unless the other 8 did it too.

As I understand it (I wasn't in on the deliberations which led to the establishment of the Center for the Study of Teaching) the five "foci" which the group concentrated on were developed because some of the faculty were not content with the research on teaching (like that summarized in N. L. Gage The Scientific Basis of the Art of Teaching, N. Y., Teachers College Press, 1977) which concentrated primarily on teacher behavior that resulted in pupils' academic achievement. This research is basically empirical, and primarily is experimental. That empirical experimental bias is one I share, and I joined the group partly because I wanted to explore its limitations. I find that I still have that bias, and even feel that the five foci (Teaching as Creating, etc.) could also be subjected to experimental trial. Perhaps Eisner's "connoisseurship" notion is of a different order, but we haven't fully explored that trail yet, or any of the others, for that matter.

That's why I think we should continue. We've only just begun, both in substance--the nature of teaching--and in procedure--faculty and students studying together in a search for equality. Our very difficulties and conflicts make that imperative, as much as the nature of the task itself.

Let me recount an incident, and the feelings I had about it at the time and wrote down while it was happening:

VISITOR AS INTRUDER

As a sign that the group has achieved some kind of unity, for me, is that I found myself resenting the presence of a visitor, a student who came to see one of the professors and was apparently invited to stay. I was relieved when he left after a while.

I'd like to know if others felt that way, especially since there have been a couple of incidents which seemed to endanger the unity of the group.

Then he came back, and I was not pleased, especially when he was asked by a member of the group to speak on the topic. I still don't understand what he was doing here; perhaps I missed a previous announcement.

I tried telling myself that I shouldn't resent him, but it didn't work. Naturally!

I'd like to request, but not insist, that this statement be appended to John's document, in whatever usage that paper may be employed.

APPENDIX A

Assembly Four

THE QUEST FOR QUALITY FACULTY IN INSTITUTIONS WHICH EDUCATE
"What Contextual Factors Influence the Determination of Quality?"

Abstract of Paper

THEORY BUILDING AS A PROCESS FACTOR INFLUENCING
THE DETERMINATION OF QUALITY FACULTY
IN TEACHER EDUCATION

Presenters and Panel Members

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THEORY BUILDING AS A PROCESS FACTOR INFLUENCING
THE DETERMINATION OF QUALITY FACULTY
IN TEACHER EDUCATION

The purpose of the paper is to describe a process in which contextual factors influencing the development of quality faculty can be identified. The focus of the paper is a project developed by the Center for the Study of Teaching at the College of Education, University of Maryland, College Park. Contextual factors are those related to collaborative process of theory building by teacher education faculty and graduate students.

Major Points to Be Developed

The major points to be developed in the paper are based on assumptions regarding the nature of a profession and the contextual need for professional educators to be engaged in the study of their practice. Our colleagues and associates in AACTE have characterized one point very well.

Professions cannot exist without an undergirding science. To fail to develop principles, concepts and theories and to validate practice is to restrict the occupation to the level of a craft. (1)

The Center for the Study of Teaching has identified five foci as aspects of teaching that can and need to be studied and validated. The five areas which are being studied deal with investigating and describing teaching as creating, communicating, decision making, valuing and aesthetic phenomena.

A second point to be discussed is the need for the profession to continue the systematic study of teaching as a fruitful activity and one that indeed has promise for improving the quality

of teacher educator practice. In completing his discussions of paradigms used in the study of teaching, Gage has predicted that research on teaching ". . . will proceed as 'normal science'. . . New variables will be identified, invented and measured." (2)

A third emphasis will be on the benefits of collaborative inquiry which takes place in context among groups of faculty and graduate students who are motivated to study and research practice for the purpose of building theory. The particular theory building process to be discussed in the paper has been referred to as metatheory and defined by Snow. "A metatheory is a theory concerned with the development, investigation or description of theory itself." (3) Recently, metatheory has been used by groups of counselors searching for a method to evaluate theories in counseling and psychotherapy. (4) It will be argued that the quality of faculty will indeed be influenced through the contextual inquiry process used in the development, investigation and description of teaching theories.

Methodology

Members of the College of Education faculty and advanced graduate students who express an interest will enroll in a course entitled, "The Study of Teaching in School and Non-School Settings." The design and implementation of the course is the responsibility of the course members. The course design was developed as one project sponsored by the Center for the Study of Teaching in the spring of 1980. The first semester study

will be carried out in the fall of 1980 and will continue in subsequent semesters as need and interest indicate.

There are six phases of the course design. The first three phases focus on (1) the examination of theories related to one or more of the foci of the Center (for example Aesthetics), (2) application of the theory to teaching in school and non-school settings, (3) formulation of an applied theory of teaching (tentative) as an aesthetic phenomenon.

(1) T_A $\longrightarrow$ (2) Teaching $\longrightarrow$ (3) T_{TA}

In the last three phases, formulation of a tentative theory (T_{TA}) will be (4) validated and then (5) applied to teaching for the purpose of (6) formulating variables and theory which can be further studied and verified.

(4) T_{TA} $\longrightarrow$ (5) Teaching $\longrightarrow$ (6) Variables and Theory Described

All phases will be studied by an external or internal agent(s) for the purpose of investigating the process of theory building as it relates to teaching.

The methodology to be used in phase 2 and in the effort to study the theory building process will be developed along the lines of ethnographic methods currently described in educational research using naturalist observations of human subjects. (5) Measurement procedures determining the impact of contextual influences on the quality of faculty may be carried out if indeed it is logically possible to attempt such measurement at

the end of one semester. The focus of any procedures which may be incorporated would examine differences over time in student evaluation of teaching, changes in faculty use of time, or changes in faculty course design or development of new curricula components in teacher education programs either undergraduate or graduate.

Conclusions

At the close of the first semester study, the faculty/student group will report the results of all six phases with specific reference to the subsequent steps to be taken in the process of metatheory as it relates to the study of teaching in school and non-school settings. Investigators involved in the study of the theory building process will report both their design and findings. Findings from any attempts to measure influence on faculty will also be reported. It is anticipated that the conclusions will be descriptions of validation processes with emphasis on the question of the feasibility and fruitfulness of developing a theoretical body of knowledge about teaching from the vantage point of the five major foci of the Center for the Study of Teaching.

Follow Up

In concluding the presentation the members of the research group will engage the audience in discussion, distribute hand-outs describing the details of the methodology and findings, and involve the participants in mini-activities which provide an opportunity to engage in a few aspects of validation procedures.

Materials from the Center for the Study of Teaching will also be available.

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